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AUTHOR Lake, Sara
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ABSTRACT

Lengthy abstracts of two journal articles and two Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) microfiche documents on the principal's role in educational innovation and change are presented. The introduction lists eight points on the principal's role which are suggested by the articles and documents. Summaries are provided for the following: (1) "Linking R&D with Schools: Perspectives in School Improvement: A Casebook for Curriculum Change" by Karen Seashore Louis and Others (ED 207 261), a textbook for school administrators on the processes of educational change which provides 12 case studies and a synthesis; (2) "Applying Our Findings to Today's Innovations" by Susan F. Loucks and David A. Zacchei, an article which culls practical advice from the Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (the NETWORK, Inc., Andover, MA); (3) "Developing Commitment to Change: Case History in Progress" by Harold Zuckerman, an article which offers a model for change based on the priority of building commitment; and (4) "Teacher Participation in Educational Innovation: Some Insights into Its Nature" by Judith A. Dawson (ED 200 593), a study which concluded that it made little difference whether teachers volunteered for or were appointed to committees planning educational innovations. Information on ordering the articles and documents is included. (DC)

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Highlights for School Administrators*

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THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN INNOVATION AND CHANGE

It is frequently said that the principal is the key to educational change. But what are the practical effects of that finding? Recent studies provide some details. Always recognizing the variability of local conditions and refraining from "one-size-fits-all" prescriptions, these studies delineate some of the things that the principal should do, and need not do, to promote effective innovation.

The articles and ERIC microfiche described below suggest the following:

- The administrator is crucial to the introduction of change, but need not always be its initiator.
- Both rational planning and humane concern are needed. Too much emphasis on either will be less effective than a flexible management style that is sensitive to many perspectives.
- The principal need not take sole responsibility. Other actors have important leadership and training roles to play.
- Those being asked to change (frequently teachers) need adequate resource support, long-term personalized training, encouragement and assurance that their efforts are valued by leadership.
- Institutionalization of an innovation should not be left to chance.
- Commitment is vital. Resistance should be expected since the prospect of change evokes strong emotion. Those who are being asked to change will be very sensitive to the commitment level of the leaders who sponsor the change. The building of commitment is a continuing process.
- Initial commitment to the idea or voluntary participation by teachers may not be necessary. Commitment can be developed and influenced by involvement.
- In selecting a faculty planning team, the representativeness of the team and the respect in which its members are held will affect the attitudes of the rest of the faculty toward the innovation.

— Sara Lake
SMERC Information Center

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1 *Linking R&D with Schools: Perspectives in School Improvement: A Casebook for Curriculum Change.* Karen Seashore Louis and Others, Abt Associates, Inc., Cambridge, MA. 1981, 204pp. ED207 261; 3 microfiche)

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Designed as a textbook for administrators on the processes of educational change, this volume provides twelve case studies of elementary and secondary schools prepared as part of RDU (Research and Development Utilization) research activities.

The administrator is seen as the gatekeeper to school change: his or her most important role is in the successful *introduction* of change. This does not mean that administrators must initiate all change; they may also respond to staff suggestions or outside mandates, serve as conduits between those desiring change and those who can accomplish it, create the context for change, be ombudsmen, use power to support or oppose a change, or be nonactors.

To set the stage for the case studies, administrative perspectives on change are outlined involving three basic theories of change in interaction with three views on the context in which change occurs. The three theories are: rational (formal decision making and planning); political (conflict and compromise, exercise of influence within power structures); and social systems (interaction of school structure and culture, interdependence of actors and environments). The three contexts for change (individuals, organizations, school environment) suggest at which level efforts to change must focus and offer different levels of autonomy to the planner. The three theories and three contexts form a matrix of nine potential perspectives. For example, the rational theory in the individual context suggests using formal planning to promote individual change, e.g., staff incentives. A combination of the political theory and the organizational perspective implies a focus on power groups.

It is not suggested that these models are distinct. Ideally, all should be considered in the change process for used alone each has serious weaknesses. Too much emphasis on rational planning — on being "scientific" — neglects very real emotions and interests that drive participants. The political model can place too much stress on conflict and manipulation. The social systems model doesn't accept the idea that conflicting values can be changed, thus limiting the actions that can be attempted. Brought together and used dynamically, the perspectives can be valuable in highlighting important issues and concerns.

The twelve case studies show differing perspectives in action and point out how local conditions require different and sensitive considerations in implementing what on the surface seem to be very similar changes.

The volume concludes with a synthesis by Sam D. Sieber in which he draws observations from the case studies on twelve administrative dilemmas defined earlier:

- High vs. low administrative involvement and control.

There is no clear consensus on the proper level of administrator involvement. At least passive support for the innovation seems necessary, but usually not sufficient. However, active support, if it takes a dictatorial form, may be counterproductive. Passive support may suffice if teachers are involved in making a non-structural change, if there is a strong tradition of faculty autonomy and self-help or if leadership is being supplied by a specialist.

- High vs. low faculty involvement.

Using a small, strong planning team has obvious functional advantages. Yet the more teachers involved in an implementation, the greater is the sense of ownership. Sieber suggests moving flexibly between the two levels of involvement in order to maximize the advantages of both.

- Open vs. closed relationships with the community.

Sieber suggests that parent involvement in the change effort can have educational and political value if those involved are not basically hostile to the change or politically motivated and if the staff genuinely desires their involvement.

*Supplemented by non-ERIC materials

- Product vs. process.

Most participants, especially at first, prefer to select a concrete product as the innovation instead of a new teaching or organizational process. The former requires less training and fewer potentially-threatening changes in roles and practices. This focus on the concrete, Sieber feels, indicates a limited understanding of all that is entailed in educational change, but it can be used to build interest and commitment which can slowly be transferred to more substantial process-oriented changes.

- Reliance on outside expertise vs. self-reliance.

An outside source may be able to supply a high-quality innovation, but one in which local participants do not have the needed feeling of ownership. It can be disastrous if the outside source fails to deliver. The leader or facilitator must be alert to mediate the outsider/insider conflicts which frequently occur.

- Fidelity vs. adaptation.

Local conditions may require adaptations in an outside design and such adaptation may increase the faculty's sense of ownership of the innovation. But the design itself may be lost if teachers are allowed to pick and choose among its components. Sieber suggests that the new plan be initially tried out as designed. If adaptations are necessary, they should be thoughtfully made.

- Validated vs. non-validated resources.

Sieber warns administrators to remember that there is a need for "social" as well as scientific validation. If a faculty wishes to adopt a non-validated practice, it may be well to respect that choice.

- Integration vs. autonomous implementation.

An autonomous innovation — one that impacts little else in the organization — is far easier to implement, because it requires less change, less threat, less training. However, integrated innovations that impact traditional curriculum and instruction are far more likely to endure and to provide qualitative change.

- Limited vs. diffuse and comprehensive goals.

Broad, idealistic goals have an initial role to play: they may raise aspiration levels, fire enthusiasm and impress the public. However, an already-motivated staff needs scaled-down, realistic objectives with which to work.

- Formalization vs. naturalism.

Groups that used formal problem-solving procedures had greater success, but the pressure to deformalize increased over time. Being unfamiliar with formal group problem solving processes, many participants may become impatient with them as their interest shifts toward the selected solution and its implementation. Sieber suggests that a specialist in group process, working with great diplomacy, may be needed to keep the process effective rather than destructive.

- Initial readiness: go vs. no go.

System readiness, he says, is extremely hard to measure.

- Contingency management: Continue vs. terminate.

It may also be difficult to decide if a project is hopelessly blocked. But projects can get through difficult times if commitment remains. It is important to examine initial motivations and the possibility of correcting identified roadblocks.

2 "Applying Our Findings to Today's Innovations." Susan F. Loucks and David A. Zacchei, *Educational Leadership*, November 1983, pp. 28-31.

This is one of eight articles in this issue of *Educational Leadership* that describe the Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (the NETWORK, Inc., Andover, MA). The Study spent three years examining 146 districts and schools in their efforts to adopt federally-sponsored validated practices.

While all eight articles supply valuable information on the study, the Loucks and Zacchei article will be outlined here because it culls some practical advice on successful implementations.

- "A Well-Defined, 'Classroom-Friendly,' Effective Innovation." Adoption of a validated practice is far less expensive than local development but, whatever the source of the innovation, it should be clearly defined as to its key components, how it is meant to function, and its intended effects in the classroom. Its methods must "fit" classroom life and be capable of incorporation into the teacher's daily style. It needs to be measurably effective, so that teachers are rewarded by actual success in using it.

- "Ample, Appropriate Help from a Variety of Players." The role of local facilitator is critical. In a multi-school setting, the role is most frequently taken by a central office person who has the legitimacy, time, centrality, and clout to carry it off. The local facilitator acts as cheerleader to build local enthusiasm; as a linker to external expertise, training and resources; and as a troubleshooter who manages day-to-day problems after the outside experts have departed. The troubleshooter may, for example, work with individual teachers to hone and integrate the skills they've learned, providing further training and advice based on expressed needs, making opportunities for trained teachers to demonstrate and share their expertise and seeing to the institutionalization of the innovation.

External trainers should be highly creditable to teachers, since the latter will learn new techniques through emulation. Training should be differential; that is, one teacher, already comfortable with most aspects of the innovation, may need little more than a short workshop while another teacher, for whom the innovation means a substantial change in style or methods, will need long-term personalized assistance.

Beyond the essential functions of acknowledging the importance of the innovation, arranging school resources and schedules to accommodate it and keeping communications going with the local facilitator, the principal need not play an active role in implementation unless personal interest dictates such involvement. However, the principal does need to be aware of how the project will affect his or her staff and, therefore, the functioning of the school.

- "Clear Direction from Administrators." It does not seem to matter if teachers are initially consulted about an innovation. They will implement it willingly if the administrator gives them strong leadership in the form of verbal advocacy, resource redirection to

supply their needs in relation to the project, and monitoring and encouragement that lets them know they've not been left alone to solve all the problems.

- "Attention to Institutionalization." If the innovation is to become a regular part of school life, it must receive administrative support in the form of direction, established supply and maintenance routines, a place in written curriculum guides, orientation for new teachers and dissemination to all eligible users. Institutionalization also requires that two major threats be removed. The budget should be secured through a line item and the danger of key personnel leaving should be circumvented by the initial training, at each site, of a "critical mass" of teachers. Once these steps have been taken, the innovation should begin to ensure its own life through its demonstrated effectiveness.

3 "Developing Commitment to Change: Case History in Progress." Harold Zuckerman, *THRUST for Educational Leadership*, May-June 1983, pp. 11-13.

Based on his experiences as director of SOAR (Schools Organized for Academic Revitalization) in Oakland, California, the author offers a model for change based on the priority of building commitment. He cautions that any time people are asked to change their attitudes and behavior, they may react with hostility, anger, conflict, and sabotage. Such reactions must be expected and carefully planned for by the change sponsors (those in power who initiate the change) and the change agent (project director).

The first major phase is Preparation, when people are put in initial contact with the idea and their awareness of change is fostered. The announcement should offer clear information on the proposed change, its timelines, and those involved. Awareness should be developed through newsletters, public meetings, or other forms of communication targeted to specific groups. At this point, people have usually not formed an opinion as to merits of the plan. Their questions and concerns should be responded to with further information, not treated as attacks.

In the second phase, Awareness, judgments are formed about the value and impact of the proposed change. Resistance by different groups should be analyzed and differentially treated. Positive perceptions must be developed among key persons and groups or the change can go no further. If the change sponsors lag in their commitment, it can kill the commitment of others.

The final phase, Commitment, consists of three stages, Installation, Adoption, and Institutionalization, the last of which may take many years. In this phase, the change targets remain very sensitive to the commitment and positive attitudes of the change sponsors and the change agent.

Zuckerman concludes by offering these general lessons:

- Commitment is expensive and the change sponsors need to know that.
- Commitment strategies must be planned from the beginning.
- Building commitment is a developmer t process; there are no shortcuts.
- If you can't build commitment, you won't succeed, so change your plan.
- You'll get both emotional and intellectual reactions. The former are usually stronger. Know the difference before you respond.
- Recognize the power and responsibility of learning how to manage change.

4 *Teacher Participation in Educational Innovation: Some Insights into Its Nature.* Judith A. Dawson, Research for Better Schools, Inc., Philadelphia, PA 1981, 4 pp. (ED200 593; 1 microfiche)

Through analysis of the pre-implementation planning processes of five elementary and secondary schools working on basic skills or career education projects, the researchers in this study concluded that it made little difference whether teachers volunteered for or were appointed to committees planning educational innovations. Both volunteers and appointees participated willingly and their level of commitment and participation was subject to the same influences, many of which had to do with the roles they performed and the rewards and pressures they felt.

The following factors seem to explain why the volunteer nature of teacher participation is not important: some members were appointed because of previously expressed interest in the idea under consideration, many became committed after seeing the merits of the plan and most saw appointment as a legitimate function of the principal. Volunteering was not a custom at all schools.

Whatever a participant's initial level of motivation, certain incentives and deterrents to participation emerged over time:

- commitment to the innovation;
- the reward of increased teacher/principal and teacher/teacher communication;
- compatibility or conflict between the project and other classroom goals;
- the costs of participation in terms of time and strain on other duties;
- the perceived future of the innovation; and
- commitment to specific persons involved.

There were five basic roles that participants took in their committee work:

- Student — listening to lectures, learning new techniques, being assessed;
- Board Member — making decisions from a set agenda, listening to presentations by field agent;

- Researcher — observing other teachers, examining test scores, collecting and analyzing data;
- Instructional Innovator — planning and implementing individual classroom change; or
- Trainer — sharing expertise with others.

In general, participants preferred those roles (Board Member, Instructional Innovator, and Trainer) that confirmed their professional status and were relevant to their classroom role. Although most enjoyed the process of classroom observation, they disliked the tedium of data collection and analysis that was part of the Researcher role. Dislike was felt for the Student role. Attitudes toward participation varied with the satisfaction felt for the predominant role the participant was playing.

It was also found that the composition of the planning group had an impact on the attitudes of non-participants toward the innovation. If the planning group contained representatives of the important school groups (formal or informal) and if its members were held in general respect by their peers, the chances for the innovation's successful dissemination to the rest of the faculty were enhanced.

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